

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Minutes, January 27, 20024

Members present: Joseph Barrell, James Heigham, Deborah Emello, Andrew McClurg, and Karl Haglund

Also present: Tim Higgins-Senior Planner, Tom Gatzunis-Director of Community Development, Mary Jo Frisoli-Chair of the Traffic Advisory Committee

7:05 p.m. There being a quorum, Chairman, Joe Barrell opened the meeting.

General Business:

- The meeting minutes from December 16, 2003 were approved (5:0 vote) with an addition of the italicized text from Karl Haglund in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the second page as follows: “Karl Haglund *indicated that some residents have* suggested taking a different position on several issues such as increasing the size of the buffers to make the property less desirable for development.”
- Karl Haglund noted that he is awaiting a decision from the State Ethics Commission on the potential conflict of interest concerning his participation in the Belmont Upland public hearing process.
- Joseph Barrell noted he has received several pieces of correspondence concerning the Belmont Uplands. They will be placed in the Uplands file by Tim Higgins.
- Joseph Barrell read mail and noted meetings of the Capitol Budget Committee to discuss the budget.
- Discussion of proposed zoning amendments took place. James Heigham suggested the building set back lines issue be broken into six separate articles. Tim Higgins walked through his December 24th memorandum on suggested zoning amendments. The Fire Station zoning (it is currently General Residence) was discussed and will be included in the hearing notice. Creation of an interim zone for the corridor was also mentioned and will be included in the Trapelo Road Fire Station hearing so the optimum solution can be reached for the station. The mixed-use building at corner of White Street and Trapelo Road is currently zoned GR as is the church.
- Tim Higgins explained the zone line change for the affordable housing on B Street. When the lot was flipped to the other side of the street, the zoning changed and it was not noticed until it was too late for a public hearing. The alternative 40B approach would cost approximately \$30,000 - \$ 40,000 according to the Massachusetts Housing Partnership staff.

- Building height and grade were discussed. Tom Gatzunis noted that it is a problem with interpretation and staff time needs. Enforceability is not an issue. It will be noticed and OCD staff will work on it. If the text is ready it will be heard, if not it will be withdrawn.

7:35 p.m. James Heigham read the Public Hearing notice for the Belmont Upland rezoning request.

Correspondence was received from O'Neill requesting a continuance to the Board's meeting on 2/24/04. It was moved and so voted 5:0.

Joseph Barrell noted that they are meeting with the Board of Assessors tomorrow evening.

Susan Bass asked that the deadline for written comments be extended to 2/23. It was agreed.

7:40 p.m. Trapelo Road/Belmont Street Corridor Discussion

Andrew McClurg opened the discussion with a brief history of his workshops and his visit to the Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) two weeks ago. At that meeting, it was agreed a joint discussion with the Planning Board would be a good idea. Moving the project forward for placement on the state Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is the ultimate goal. He suggests that the Planning Board "hand off" the corridor design to the TAC through a recommendation to the Selectmen.

Tim Higgins provided a brief synopsis of his 1/22/04 memorandum concerning the next steps in this important project. He reiterated the need for a formal vote of support from the Board of Selectmen. This would give the project legitimacy and formalize a process for the planning and design as the project –moves toward placement on the TIP. He strongly recommends a written report from the Planning Board to the Selectmen with some policy recommendations – especially concerning reductions in pavement width.

Mary Jo Frisoli, TAC Chair stated her agreement in working cooperatively with the Planning Board. She supported the need for a report from the Planning Board to the Board of Selectmen. It will give them guidance. There will be difficult times on certain issues. TAC will support obtaining funding. They are not engineers but will work with consultants.

Tom Gatzunis noted any TIP application must come from the Board of Selectmen. He recommends a report be filed by the Planning Board to the Board of Selectmen so the TAC can take advantage of the Planning Board's work over the last 14 months. The TAC can work off of the basic assumptions obtained by the Planning Board.

Andrew McClurg expressed reluctance toward a recommendation that the road should be narrowed. There are differing opinions on the issue. A general and lengthy discussion ensued on the question of reducing pavement width as a general policy and the need to confirm this by traffic counts. Tim Higgins advocated for strong wording to suggest a policy that promotes reduced pavement.

He noted that the results of the 14 month process by the Planning Board should be shared in a policy recommendation to the Selectmen.

Mary Jo Frisoli believes that the Board of Selectmen is looking toward the Planning Board, TAC and the Business and economic Development Planning Group (BEDPG) to come to them with a proposed process to continue the revitalization of the corridor.

Tom Gatzunis then discussed the TIP process and the role the Corridor Study might play in it. While important in the long term planning process, the Study is only a piece of the puzzle. TIP funding is for project construction only. Design funds are from other sources. Additional discussion took place. It was then agreed to file a joint report with the TAC. Tim Higgins offered to work with Andrew McClurg on this. The report to the Board of Selectmen should result in a charge from the Board of Selectmen to the TAC and Planning Board to proceed with the project and work to have it placed on the TIP. It was agreed to have a draft of the report for the TAC meeting on 2/12/04 with A. McClurg doing the first draft. The final report can then be approved at the 2/24/04 Planning Board meeting.

8:35 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.